

That feeds and breeds by a
composture ¹² stole From general
excrement: each thing's a thief,

Shakspeare knew that the moon was the cause of the tides, [See the last Scene of *The Tempest*,] and in that respect the liquid surge, that is, the waves of the sea, rising one upon another, in the progress of the tide, may be said to *resolve the moon into salt tears* ; the moon, as the poet chooses to state the matter, losing some part of her humidity, and the accretion to the sea, in consequence of her tears being the cause of the *liquid surge*. Add to this the popular notion, yet prevailing, of the moon's influence on the weather; which, together with what has been already stated, probably induced our author here and in other places to allude to the *watry qualify* of that planet. In *Romeo and Juliet*, he speaks of her ^{*}*ixatry beams*."

Again, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* :

^{11f} Quench'd in the chaste beams of the *watry moon*." Again, more appositely, in *King Richard III*:

" That I, being *govern d* by the *walry moon* ^ " May bring forth plenteous *tears*, to drown the world," *Salt* is so often applied by Shakspeare to *tears*, that there can be no doubt that the original reading is the true one : nor had the poet, as I conceive, *dew*, at all in his thoughts. So, in *All's Well That Ends Well*: " — your *salt tears*' head—."

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

" Distasted with the *salt* of broken *tears*." Again in *King Richard III*:

^{*} Those ^ eyes of thine from mine have drawn *salt tears*." Again more appositely, in *King Henry VI. Part II*:

«-----to drain

" Upon his face an *ocean* of *salt tears*"

Mr. Toilet idly conjectures, (for conjecture is always idle ^{where} there is little difficulty,) that we should read—The *main*, ^{i.} ^{e.} the main land or continent. So, in *King Henry IV. Part II. Act III. Sc. I*: "The continent melt itself into the sea." An ^{obser} vation made by this gentleman in *Love's Labour's Lost*, ^{had} he recollected it, might have prevented him from attempting to disturb the text here: " No alteration should be made ⁱⁿ these lines that destroys the artificial structure of them/'—In ^{the} first line the sun is the thief: in the second he is ^{||} *mse|fplu7idered'* by that thief, the moon. The moon is subjected to the ^{same} fate, and, from being a *plunderer*, is herself *robbed* of moisture (line "4th and 5th) by the sea. MALOKE.

I cannot say for a certainty whether *Albumazar* or this play was first written, as *Timon* made its earliest appearance in the folio, 1623, Between *Albumazar* and *The Alchymist* there has been likewise a contest for the right of eldership. The original